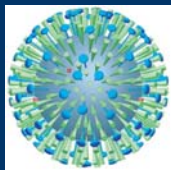


FLUBYTES



February 13, 2009

Michigan Department of Community Health, 201 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48913
For additional flu information visit: www.michigan.gov/flu

Latest Immunization News

COURT SAYS VACCINES NOT TO BLAME FOR AUTISM

The Special Masters of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims issued three rulings that the evidence overwhelmingly shows that the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine and other thimerosal containing vaccines are not to blame for autism in children. The rulings were part of the Omnibus Autism Proceeding created by the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program to handle the large volume of claims that vaccines induce autism. Parents had filed more than 4,900 claims asserting that vaccines had caused autism and other neurological problems; however, the judges ruled in favor of the science that demonstrates no causal relationship between vaccines and autism spectrum disorders. For more information on the specific rulings visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/Features/AutismDecision/>

Latest Flu News

NEW STUDY: Absolute humidity modulates influenza survival, transmission, and seasonality

A study published in this week's Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences explores the relationship between influenza transmission and survival with absolute humidity, which measures the amount of water present in the air, regardless of temperature. One of the authors, Jeffrey Shaman, an Oregon State University atmospheric scientist who specializes in ties between climate and disease transmission stated, "The correlations were surprisingly strong. When absolute humidity is low, influenza virus survival is prolonged and transmission rates go up." For more information and to view the article abstract, visit:

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/02/09/0806852106>.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO VACCINATE

With flu activity on the rise, remember that it is not too late to vaccinate. Healthcare providers are urged to protect as many of their patients as possible by continuing to administer vaccinations now through spring. For additional information and resources, visit www.michigan.gov/flu or <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/FluPrevention/>.

Flu Surveillance Update

Flu activity has continued to rise throughout Michigan, with activity level increasing to "regional" for the week ending February 7, 2009. MDCH labs confirmed 39 influenza cases this week, bringing the season total to 110: 27 influenza Bs and 83 influenza As (74 A/H1N1s). Sentinel sites reported that the proportion of visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) increased to 3.7% overall. For the first week this season, the proportion of visits due to ILI was higher than reported at this time during prior years' surveillance; however, influenza activity had already peaked (5.4% for the week ending February 2nd, 2008) and was in the process of declining. Increase in flu activity has also been observed across the United States, with 26 states reporting regional or widespread influenza activity.

For additional surveillance information, the MI Flu Focus is archived on www.michigan.gov/flu and the most current edition is included in this email. To find out about influenza activity in the U.S., visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>

Flu Resources

Access the following links for up-to-date resources:

Michigan's influenza web page: www.michigan.gov/flu

- Seasonal, Pandemic and Avian influenza
- Flu Advisory Board
- Information for Healthcare professionals, community vaccinators, clinical laboratories, families, and businesses

Flu Fighter Action Kit for Health Care Personnel
www.michigan.gov/flufighterkit

CDC influenza web page: www.cdc.gov/flu

CDC influenza podcasts:
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=10693>

MDCH would like to extend an invite for any interested health care professional to become involved in the Flu Advisory Board (FAB). To join FAB, contact Liz Harton, CDC Public Health Advisor at hartone@michigan.gov.

FluBytes is distributed to MDCH flu partners for informational and communication purposes. Please feel free to distribute widely. An archived list of past FluBytes issues can be found at:
http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_22779-125027--,00.html